

©CIL 21290 "LYING WIVES"

A presentment of troubled lives

Story Written and directed

by

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Synopsis

Theodore Stanhope (Richard Boone) has been the successful South African diamond magnate for years previous to the opening of the story. Stanhope was a drilling foreman in the soil fields of Oklahoma under the name of Burkley, who was then honest and industrious, and living happily with his wife and two-year-old daughter, Margery.

Circumstances pointed to Burkley's guilt one day, when a fellow-worker with whom he had been quarreling, was found murdered. Unable to disprove the cruel charge, and urged by his friends, who knew he was innocent, Bill Burkley disappeared and made his way to Africa, where under the assumed name of Theodore Stanhope he made a fortune.

During all these trying years, Stanhope had never communicated with his family, fearing they would learn of his whereabouts. So the years passed and he was unable to locate his wife and daughter, but found the two, Margery and they, too, had disappeared from Tulsa.

Unable to stand the strain the separation has caused, Burkley, desperate, returns to New York and employs private detectives, in a supreme effort to find his family and also clear himself of the indictment still pending against him. Reports showed that his wife has been

dead several years and that his daughter Margery (Madge Kennedy) is employed as private secretary to Wallace Graham (Niles Welch) a young, thriving Wall Street broker.

Margery's devotion to her work has made her more than an employee in the eyes of the handsome broker. Madly in love with her, Graham has summoned courage to ask Margery to become his wife, when Patricia Chase (Clara K. Young) who had financed his business at the start, and who had led Graham to believe she loved him, returns from abroad, where she had spent her honeymoon with Alvin Chase (J. Henry Sherry) an elderly banker whom she married for money. She visits Wallace Graham at his office and there begins her campaign to win back Graham and destroy his love for Margery Burkley. Wallace's greeting is rather cold. Immediately, she begins pleading that she still loves him; that she does not love her foolish old husband.

At the same time, Stanhope learning of Margery visits her at her office and poses as an old friend of her father, establishes a quick and gentle friendship with her, not letting her know he is her father.

Elsie Chase (Edna Murphy) returns home from Europe after a long absence and is introduced to her new mother. Patricia, who conceives an idea to use this young, beautiful daughter of her husband to re-establish herself with Wallace Graham and at the same time to crush his affection for Margery. Taking advantage of an opportunity, Patricia prevails on her husband to invite Graham to the Chase home to meet Elsie. Chase likes the idea, and using the excuse that he should like to become one of Graham's clients he invites him to his home, where he meets Elsie.

Although Graham shows no sign of love toward Elsie, she forces her attentions upon him - having fallen in love with the handsome broker.

Later, to further aid Elsie in her mad desire for Wallace, Alvin Chase arranges a Bal Masque in honor of Elsie's return from college. In the course of the evening Elsie interprets Wallace's consent to be her shepherd as an avowal of their betrothal. When she rushes to Patricia's room to acquaint her with the news, Patricia realizes that she herself has dug the grave. She plans then and there to break up the unlooked for affair between Elsie and Wallace.

She tries, with subtle lies, to undermine Wallace in Elsie's eyes. She goes to extremes by telling Elsie that Wallace had been her lover for years. Elsie is crushed by this news and rushes off to tell her father the terrible information. Patricia tries to stop her at the head of the stairs, but Elsie, jerking herself free, goes down the marble steps. She is picked up unconscious by the guest. Moments later is pronounced dead by a physician. The Chases, stricken and leave that same week for a protracted effort to forget.

During the absence of the Chases, Wallace and Elsie are living happily together. Theodore Chase, as a dear friend of both. He is a regular visitor to them, but he has not yet dared to tell Margery who he really is.

Four years have passed. The Graham home is blessed with a three-year-old son, Wallace, junior. About this time Patricia and Alvin return from abroad, and with no loss of time Patricia opens fire to again win Wallace for herself. Her first appearance at the Graham home

is at a party given in honor of Wallace's third birthday. Patricia, ever alert, notices the striking resemblance between Stanhope and the young Wallace, as well as the affectionate regard Stanhope has for both the boy and Margery.

Patricia begins poisoning Wallace's mind against his wife. She calls Wallace's attention to the resemblance between Stanhope and the boy. When Stanhope presents Wallace junior with five hundred dollar bonds for his birthday, Wallace senior becomes suspicious, influenced on by Patricia's sinister suggestions, that he orders Stanhope to leave home and forbids his wife to ever see him again.

Patricia, several days later, tells Wallace she will leave her husband if Wallace will run away with her. This Wallace refuses to do, and enraged Patricia demands the return of her securities which she had given him to cover the Stanhope securities Wallace had used without Stanhope's permission. She gives him until three o'clock to make good, threatening to bring criminal proceedings against him if he fails. At three, Wallace has failed to produce the necessary securities and Patricia orders his arrest on charges of embezzlement. Wallace is extremely worried over the affair, throws himself at Patricia's feet. Margery is told to go to her friend Stanhope for aid, who is in a state of desperation.

As Margery leaves for Stanhope's home, Patricia goes to the District Attorney's office, withdraws her complaint, whereupon Wallace is released. She intimates that while he was languishing in a cell his wife was with Stanhope. Wallace is slow in believing her insinuation, but when the maid advises him that upon Mrs. Graham's return he tells Patricia he will run off with her. Patricia goes home, tells Alvin Chase she is leaving him.

He pleads with her to no avail.

Wallace waits for Patricia to return. Margery, through Stanhope, has learned of her husband's release. She immediately returns to her home. Wallace is furious with Margery upon her return. At first she denies she had seen Stanhope, but at last she confesses she went there for only one reason; to free Wallace. He disbelieves her and tells her to take the child and leave his home forever, which she does, broken-heartedly.

At this point Stanhope's detectives convey to him the news that Tulsa has advised them that the real murderer of the crime he had been accused of, has confessed. Without losing a minute Stanhope rushes forth to tell Margery of the wonderful news and clear up the embarrassing situation.

Patricia returning for Wallace meets Margery, who with Wallace junior, is leaving the house. Patricia's heart is torn the first time by the sight of the boy whom she is about to take from his father. She refuses to go on with her part of the plan and urges Wallace to do likewise, and to take back his good wife. Just then Stanhope arrives upon the scene. Wallace, still in despair, tries to kill himself - but this Stanhope prevents. A furious quarrel, explains the reason for his return.

Patricia returns to Chase and asks to be taken back. He does, but he refuses to take her back, saying "I'm not leaving -- but I will not forgive you for returning."

With Stanhope's identity established, Wallace now asks for forgiveness and receiving it from all concerned takes his wife and boy back into his heart, and the story ends happily at this point - so far as Stanhope and the Graham family are concerned.

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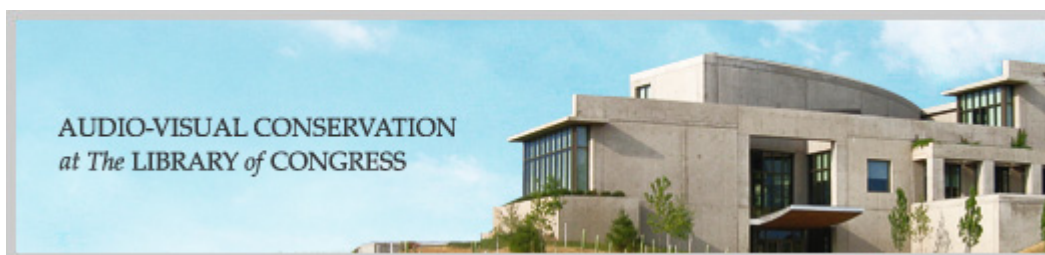
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